

REMARKS

Claim 9 has been amended. Support for the amendments to claim 9 can be found in the specification as originally filed, for example, at page 24, line 27 – page 25, line 5. No new matter has been added. Claims 9 and 11-13 are presented for further examination.

The rejection of claims 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0021571 (“Koma”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,562,800 (“Kawamura”) and the rejection of claims 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Koma in view of Kawamura in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0016157 (“Sundar”) are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 9 has been amended to recite, *inter alia*, “driving the second substrate holding mechanism . . . while the substrate is being attracted and adhered to the third substrate holding mechanism”.

As explained at page 24, line 27 – page 25, line 5, of the present specification,

[A]fter the electrostatic chuck 34 turns ON so as to start to attract the wafer W, the application of voltage to the electrostatic attraction/adhesion electrode 45 is stopped, so that the attraction and adhesion of the wafer W by the electrostatic chuck 43 is stopped (OFF). Thus, a method that drives the electrostatic chuck 34 (ON) so as to hold the wafer W against the electrostatic chuck 34 while the electrostatic chuck 43 is holding the wafer W, and thereafter cancels the holding of the wafer W by the electrostatic chuck 43 (OFF) is also employed at the time of transferring the wafer W from the electrostatic chuck 43 to the electrostatic chuck 34.

Accordingly, at the time of transferring the wafer (substrate) from electrostatic chuck 43 (the third substrate holding mechanism) to electrostatic chuck 34 (the second substrate holding mechanism), the attraction and adhesion of the wafer by electrostatic chuck 43 is stopped after electrostatic chuck 34 starts attracting the wafer. Thus, electrostatic chuck 34 is driven while electrostatic chuck 43 is attracting and adhering the wafer. This configuration contributes to the effect described at page 25, lines 6-15 of the present specification (*i.e.*, preventing warping or curving from occurring to the wafer and maintaining the flatness of the wafer at the time of transferring the wafer from the conveyor to stage 33).

The Office Action asserts that Koma “discloses a method of conveying a substrate from a first base 40, inside 10, including a first substrate holding mechanism to a second base 58b, inside 4A, including a second substrate holding mechanism using a conveyor 17 including a third substrate holding mechanism 17A”. (Pages 2-3).

Paragraph [0077] of Koma explains, “[T]he attraction by the wafer holding portion 17 is released, and at the same time, the protective film 11a of the semiconductor wafer 11 is attracted to and held by the attraction holes 58b of the lower electrode 58.”

Accordingly, the attraction of the semiconductor wafer 11 to the attraction holes 58b is started at the same time that the attraction of the semiconductor

wafer 11 by the wafer holding portion 17 is stopped. Thus, there is no overlap in attraction of the semiconductor wafer 11 between the attraction holes 58b and the wafer holding portion 17. Thus, Koma fails to disclose or suggest “driving the second substrate holding mechanism . . . while the substrate is being attracted and adhered to the third substrate holding mechanism”, as recited in amended independent claim 9.

Kawamura, which the Office Action cites merely for disclosure of “a holding mechanism for a conveyor being an electrostatic chuck” (page 4), does not cure the above-noted deficiencies with regard to Koma. In particular, the proposed combination of Koma and Kawamura fails to disclose or suggest, *inter alia*, “driving the second substrate holding mechanism . . . while the substrate is being attracted and adhered to the third substrate holding mechanism”.

Similarly, Sundar, which the Office Action cites merely for disclosure of “a second base, which is an electrostatic chuck, is provided in reduced pressure chambers ([0089], ln. 22) in order to a secure wafer for processing ([0089], ln. 22-25) and to protect the substrate from debris from the processing” (page 5), does not cure the above-noted deficiencies with regard to Koma and Kawamura. In particular, the proposed combination of Koma, Kawamura, and Sundar fails to disclose or suggest, *inter alia*, “driving the second substrate holding

mechanism . . . while the substrate is being attracted and adhered to the third substrate holding mechanism”.

In view of the foregoing, the application is respectfully submitted to be in condition for allowance, and prompt favorable action thereon is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #010986.55283US).

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